

CHARLOTTE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AND

CHARLOTTE HARBOR COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND CHARLOTTE  
HARBOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE

JOINT MEETING

FEBRUARY 26, 2009

A joint meeting was held at the Murdock Administration Complex in Room 119, Port Charlotte, Florida. The following members were present: Chairman Duffy, Commissioner Loftus, Commissioner Cummings, Commissioner Skidmore, and Commissioner Starr. Also in attendance were County Administrator Baltz, County Attorney Knowlton, Deputy Clerk Lansing, CHCRA Chairman, James W. Herston, Vice Chair, Michael Haymans, Secretary, Grace Amodeo, David Schmidt, Nathaniel Cooley, Charlotte Ventola, and Evelyn Loeffler. The following members were absent: None.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Commissioner Cummings was not present for this portion of the meeting)

I. Introductions

Chairman Duffy led the introductions and advised she was allowing a citizen to comment prior to the Overview.

Candace Wehbe requested the Joint Committee consider economic development in the form of a Village of the Arts and a Permanent Art Walk in the Charlotte Harbor area and provided detail related to the decrease in crime in that area.

(Commissioner Cummings was present for the remainder of the meeting)

## II. Overview of Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Plan and Project Update

Debrah Forester provided a brief overview presentation and update which paralleled visual slides, and included the following topics: History, Objectives, Implementation, the Vision for Charlotte Harbor, Community Redevelopment Plan - Planning Sub-Districts (2006), Implementation Strategies, Goal Phase 1 - 2006-2011, Master Sidewalk Plan, Future US 41 Conceptual Design Plan, Accomplishments 2004-2009 Review, Gateway, Community ID, Park Improvements, Sign Grant Program, Business Incentive Grants, Architectural Standards, Infrastructure, Collaboration with Punta Gorda, Next 5 Years, Gateway Pedestrian Promenade Phase I and II, Existing Conditions (Phase I) and Enhancements, (Phase II) Pedestrian Promenade, and Programming. **Chairman Duffy** commended Ms. Forester and staff for their excellent work on Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) improvements.

## III. Action Item: Bridge Banner Options

Ms. Forester explained the banners history, said there has been on-going conversations related to their condition, advised the City of Punta Gorda wants them removed, noted CHCRAs desire for an alternative, mentioned meeting with Florida Department of Transportation and Public Works related to pricing, and advised quotes and recommendations. **Commissioner Loftus** said it was agreed upon that installation, removal, and repair was to be split between the City of Punta Gorda CRA and the CHCRA. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked for confirmation of pricing. Ms. Forester responded. **Chairman Duffy** explained she has already reviewed pricing and advised the breakdown of costs. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked if Public Works could do it since they are on the County payroll. Ms. Forester stated Public Works estimate was \$4,000, but explained they have a heavy

workload already. **Commissioner Starr** clarified the options and costs, suggested leaving the arms up after banner removal and renting them to outside groups for their flag installation, opined we should use Public Works and keep the money within the County, and remarked the least expensive way to go is to split the cost with the City of Punta Gorda.

Mr. Haymans advised he has been involved in the issue for some time, opined the City of Punta Gorda CRA has an obligation to share in the costs, and expressed concern with getting them to pay their share. Mr. Haymans commented that the banner removal is a two man job with an extension ladder and safety line, noted it is unfortunate that the County is required to abide by Risk Management recommendations and suggested the County could find a less expensive way to handle this. Mr. Haymans remarked he considered forming a small group of volunteers to take care of the installation and removal in a cost effective manner, expressed frustration with the costs and risk requirements involved, commented that the costs ruined a good Community idea, and recommended leaving them down because of the unreasonable costs involved. **Commissioner Skidmore** said he shares in Mr. Haymans frustrations and asked Risk Management to explain.

Loss Control Coordinator, Walt Black explained the OSHA regulations and restrictions related to climbing poles over water, read the codes into the record, and said he would provide a written copy to the Commission. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked about using the Coast Guard Auxiliary. **Chairman Duffy** asked about companies that do similar work on the Skyway Bridge. Ms. Forester provided detail related to conversations with Signs are Us, explained the process and options, and advised the banner posts are 22' in the air. **Commissioner Skidmore** understood the methodology of charging departments for cost accounting, remarked Public Works employees work for us, and opined there is no real cost of \$4,000 since they are on our payroll. Mr. Baltz explained the issue in detail and advised the Board could provide direction to do the task for the CRA.

**Commissioner Cummings** talked about the original notion of using Public Works to perform the job for \$4,000, noted overhead costs and the fact another project will be delayed, stated Public Works resources are stretched, opined the initial design has caused many of the problems, suggested they urge the City of Punta Gorda CRA to share in the costs, and indicated they should be removed in the most cost effective way. Charlotte Ventola read the original banner selection document which indicated the costs would be split between Charlotte County and the City of Punta Gorda. **Chairman Duffy** requested a copy of the document. Ms. Amodeo opined the City is also opposed to banner maintenance and other related expenses. **Commissioner Loftus** discussed funding sources. **Chairman Duffy** remarked that the traffic was backed up for miles during the banner installation. Nathaniel Cooley asked for a breakdown of costs related to the Public Works estimate. **Commissioner Skidmore** recommended the issue be brought up at the next Joint Meeting in March and go from there. **Commissioner Cummings** suggested they do not waste additional time, said they should arrange for banner removal, and commented they can request reimbursement from the CRAs after that. **Commissioner Starr** asked that Public Works do the job to keep the money in the County. **Commissioner Cummings** said he would include that in the motion as a friendly amendment.

**COMMISSIONER CUMMINGS MOVED TO DIRECT PUBLIC WORKS TO REMOVE THE BRIDGE BANNERS IN THE MOST COST EFFECTIVE WAY, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOFTUS.**

Mr. Haymans joked if they do not arrest him for theft, the problem can be gone. James Herston remarked the CHCRA may be able to assume the responsibility since the cost is under \$5,000. **Chairman Duffy** acknowledged the offer and advised the County would like to see the City pay their half.

**Motion Carried 5:0.**

IV. Action Item: Review and Acceptance of Proposed 2009 Work Plan (Attachment A)

Ms. Forester referenced Attachment A from the packet material and provided detailed background. **Commissioner Skidmore** asked for clarification related to the work plan. Ms. Forester responded and provided additional information related to line items. **Chairman Duffy** asked for detail associated with the Art Walk. Ms. Forester answered and continued to explain line items.

Mr. Baltz brought up Tax Increment Financing (TIF) revenues collected and asked how they are doing annually for Charlotte CRA properties. Ms. Forester stated what has been collected, said numbers were slightly affected by the decrease in property values, and advised what to expect in the future.

**COMMISSIONER LOFTUS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSED 2009 WORK PLAN (ATTACHMENT A), SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SKIDMORE.**  
**Motion Carried 5:0.**

Mr. Haymans thanked the Board for their support of the work plan. **Chairman Duffy** expressed appreciation to the CRA for their hard work and recommendations.

V. Action Item: Direction on regulatory changes - Nuisance Ordinance (Attachment B)

County Attorney Knowlton explained the history behind this Action Item, explained the legalities involved, said this is a Board policy decision, and requested direction. **Commissioner Cummings** expressed his concerns and opposition to this item. **Commissioner Loftus** concurred, remarked the Sheriff's Department has worked hard to reduce incidents in the area, and opined there is enough Statute to eliminate the problem. Ms. Loeffler commented on the current ordinances, opined they are not sufficient, explained problems associated with current procedures, suggested the ordinances be updated, and noted the police have requested an update along with the addition of a No Camping/No Vagrancy/Open Container regulation.

Mr. Haymans was surprised this item was put on the agenda, explained how the committee has addressed the issue, said the subject is brought up at every meeting by Ms. Loeffler and her daughter, and noted the item is not a committee recommendation. Mr. Schmidt said he owns fifteen units in that area, said the police is not reporting to the landlords, and said he evicts those involved. Ms. Knowlton confirmed the right to evict for illegal activity. **Chairman Duffy** commented on an active Landlord Association in Charlotte County and suggested they coordinate with the Sheriff's Department. **Chairman Duffy** indicated an ordinance passed in Collier County related to no sleep over camping, mentioned its requirements, and suggested they take a look at it. **Commissioner Cummings** opined government should not be involved with this. Mr. Haymans agreed, stated the importance of freedom, said we should not decide who can and cannot camp, talked about presumption and tolerance, and urged the Board to vote against this item. **Commissioner Starr** discussed the costs involved with creating another level of government and provided detail related to his opposition. **Chairman Duffy** noted she has received a lot of feedback related to this subject and suggested the Board consider this issue at a later date.

**COMMISSIONER SKIDMORE MOVED TO DENY REGULATORY CHANGES RELATED TO THE NUISANCE ORDINANCE (ATTACHMENT B), SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOFTUS.**  
**Motion Carried 5:0.**

**VI. Public Comment**

Candace Wehbe announced she nor her mother requested the item be put on the agenda, explained the update intent is to give tenants the right to contact landlords when there is a problem, mentioned drug transactions and arrests in the area, and suggested we look at bordering counties.

VII. Committee Comments

Mr. Cooley opined the CRA is doing great things, said crime in the Bayshore Park area has improved, noted the area is becoming a community, commended all those involved with the movies in the park, and commented on a Sarasota ordinance which states you are not allowed to be homeless in Sarasota County. Mr. Schmidt indicated the area has improved over the last 15 years, expressed concern that the area may go downhill again, opined landlords need to be careful who they rent to, and talked about the right to evict drug dealers. Mr. Haymans opined the area is positioned to blossom, talked about the positive benefit of sewers and water, commented that the private sector is going to make a difference when the market returns, and noted he is pleased to be part of the advisory committee. Ms. Loeffler also stated she is happy to be on this committee, mentioned some committee accomplishments, and clarified her previous statement related to camping. Ms. Ventola and Ms. Amodeo opined the area has improved and commented that the committee has done a good job. Mr. Herston thanked the Board for their support, opined amazing things for Charlotte Harbor in the future, and offered committee assistance when needed. **Commissioner Loftus** expressed thanks to past and present advisory boards for their efforts in improving Charlotte Harbor. **Commissioner Starr** thanked all those involved for their contribution. **Commissioner Skidmore** praised the committee process and admired the individuals involved, opined open communication is key, suggested procedures related to drug enforcement and crime in the Charlotte Harbor area, and offered to prepare a letter asking the Sheriff to increase patrolling in the Charlotte Harbor area.

VIII. Board Comments

**Commissioner Loftus** expressed thanks to past and present advisory boards for their efforts in improving Charlotte Harbor. **Commissioner Starr** thanked all those involved for their contribution. **Commissioner Skidmore** praised the committee process and admired the individuals involved, opined open communication is key, suggested procedures related to drug enforcement and crime in the Charlotte Harbor area, and offered

to prepare a letter asking the Sheriff to increase patrolling in the Charlotte Harbor area.

IX. Summation of Workshop

Chairman Duffy thanked the CHCRA Advisory Committee for their active role and accomplishments over the years, asked the Commissioners to review information prior to making decisions related to the Nuisance Ordinance, said she has talked to many citizens that have been negatively affected by this issue, noted the rights of the people and taxpayers, explained criminals are setting up camps all over the County, commented that Law Enforcement needs the laws to protect our citizens, and urged the Commissioners to bring it forward and consider it. Commissioner Cummings advised he always does his homework before establishing his opinion, announced this topic has come up several times in the past, and explained he had done the research.

ADJOURNED: 10:38 AM

Signature on file in Commission Minutes  
Chairman

ATTEST:

BARBARA T. SCOTT, CLERK  
OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND  
EX-OFFICIO TO THE BOARD  
OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

By: Signature on file in Commission Minutes  
Deputy Clerk